

HISTORICAL NOTES  
ON  
SOUTHLAND

By J. O. P. WATT

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# Southland

What today is generally regarded as Southland is larger than the province of Southland formed in 1861 by a breakaway from Otago. The province was bordered on the east by the Maitauru River and on the west by the Waiau. The northern boundary was a bit indefinite, but it did not go as far north as Queenstown. Today some Southlanders think of Queenstown as being in Southland, and this is understandable in that several Government departments include Queenstown in their districts administered from Invercargill.

Southland rejoined Otago in 1870 and was part of that province when the provincial governments were abolished in 1876. However, Southland is generally regarded as a distinct entity and its boundaries as those of the Southland land district. These include Kingston but not Queenstown.

Southland, or the Murihiku block as it was then known, became part of the province of Otago under the N.Z. Constitution Act passed by the House of Commons in 1852. It was potentially the most productive part of that province, in spite of the adverse opinion of Frederick Tuckett, who visited Bluff and Riverton in search for a site for the Free Church of Scotland settlement. He was favourably impressed with the little settlement at Riverton, but not with the land thereabouts. In his opinion "the prairie affords scarcely any food for cattle." So Tuckett selected the site where Dunedin stands.

Later visitors were more perceptive. In 1850 H.M.S. Acheron was engaged surveying the coasts of Southland. Her commander, Captain J.L. Stokes, and a draughtsman, W.J.W. Hamilton, made a trip of about 30 miles up the Oreti River in a whaleboat, and found a "most desirable tract of

country." Later Hamilton and Lieutenant Spencer went exploring up the Aparima River, and were impressed with the fine grassy downs. In May of that year they walked from Bluff to Dunedin in 16 days, and made a report to Captain William Cargill, leader of the Otago pioneers. They said that the Murihiku block "offered peculiar advantages for the formation of an extensive settlement." The plain east of Jacob's River (Riverton) comprised at least 600,000 acres of "rich soil clothed with fine grass." There were 200 head of cattle on McKoy's run at Sandy Point "showing prime condition from the excellent feed," and there was another large herd at Jacob's River. All this belies Tuckett's opinion.

When he visited Wellington Captain Stokes gave a favourable report of the Murihiku block to Edward J. Eyre, lieutenant governor of New Munster, one of the provinces into which New Zealand was then divided. Eyre sent W.B.D. Mantell to negotiate the purchase of the block from the Maoris.

On his journey to Bluff to meet the Maori representatives, Mantell was accompanied by a number of would-be runholders who hoped to make early application for runs in the block once the purchase had been completed. One of them was Dr J.A.R. Menzies who was to become the first superintendent of Southland. The party spent a night on what was to be the site of Invercargill. According to one account, the only inhabitant was a wild cattle beast which viewed the human intruders with disapproval before making off into the bush.

Once the purchase was completed in 1854, settlement in Southland went ahead rapidly. It was because they felt they were not receiving fair treatment from the Otago Provincial Council that the southern settlers decided to form a separate province. This was achieved in 1861.

Under the Southland Provincial Government considerable progress was made. For example, the railway from Invercargill to Bluff was in working order, and the railway from Invercargill to Winton was on the eve of being opened, when Southland rejoined Otago. It is true that the Southland Council was in debt, but on the other side of the ledger were assets such as the two railways, a fairly good road to Bluff and piers at Bluff harbour and the Mokomoko. The parallel that has been drawn between the return of Southland to Otago with the return of the Prodigal Son, therefore lacks justification. That biblical character did not return bearing gifts.

The discovery of rich goldfields in the Lake Wakatipu district caused a temporary boom in Southland. This was because Bluff became the port and Invercargill the supply base for these fields, even though they were in Otago. The boom was followed by the inevitable "bust", and it was partly because of this that Southlanders came to realise

that the real wealth of the province was in its broad acres, in its forests and in its coal deposits. Gold was found, but never in quantities rich and extensive enough to spark off a big rush.

### INVERCARGILL

When as Governor of New Zealand, Colonel Thomas Gore Browne visited Dunedin in 1856, he agreed to a request that Bluff should be declared a port of entry. He also suggested that a town should be established in the south and named Invercargill, in honour of Captain Cargill. The name is rather incongruous because "Inver" is a Scottish geographical term meaning "the mouth of". However, vice-regal requests are not to be ignored. The Governor also suggested that Bluff should be named Campbelltown, in honour of his wife who was a Campbell. This was the official name of the town until 1917, when the shorter and more convenient name, Bluff, was substituted. The harbour from the time it was declared a port of entry has been known as Bluff or the Bluff. The "Gore" in the Governor's name was used for the main street of Bluff, and for what was to become the second largest town of Southland. There was some objection. After all gore means blood, though in its use as a place name probably few think of that meaning.

Invercargill was laid out by J.T. Thomson in 1856 and it was he who was responsible for its broad main streets and for its streets being named after Scottish rivers.

Thomson records that when he left Invercargill only three premises had been built, the survey office, Macandrew's store and Lind's accommodation house. But the population was larger than this number of buildings would seem to indicate. Most were living in tents. Some of the early arrivals soon began farming, but it must have been laborious work. W.H.S. Roberts has left this record:- "There was not a plough anywhere in the district, so all agriculture was done by manual labour. McClymont cleared off the scrub and tussock with an adze and then hoed the ground as deep as he could. When cleared he was able to hoe 300 square yards in a long day. T. Rowan did not touch the bush on his section, but only cleared the tussocks. He then dug the ground with a spade turning it over without lifting it, in lumps about 18 inches by 12 and 4 to 6 inches deep, when it looked much as if it had been ploughed. He used to turn over 400 square yards a day."

It is satisfactory to know that these strenuous efforts were rewarded with satisfactory crops of wheat.

Another early arrival was the Rev. A. Bethune who conducted the first Christian service in Invercargill on the banks of the Puni. A plaque on the Bank of N.S.W. in Tay Street commemorates the holding of this service and also the establishment of Macandrew's store - Invercargill's first place of business.



A plaque on the Bank of N.Z. building at the corner of Tay and Clyde Streets records that on that spot John Kelly "landed the stores for the first farmers who settled near Invercargill." Another on the Australia and N.Z. Bank building records that Kelly, his wife and family built their home nearby in March 1856. Kelly was a seaman who settled on Ruapuke Island as early as 1824. He is generally regarded as having been Invercargill's first householder, and the town was sometimes called Inverkelly or Kelly's Point. He died on 17 May 1857 and so saw only the beginnings of Invercargill. A plaque on the building of J.E. Watson & Co. Ltd in Tay Street commemorates the overland journey of Hamilton and Spencer from Bluff to Dunedin in 1850.

Invercargill had its boom year (1863) during which its population increased from 1,554 to 5,161. The boom was followed by a period of stagnation, but then Invercargill began to move ahead again. It was greatly helped by the building of railways in the 1870s. At the end of that decade it had rail connection with Christchurch, Kingston, Riverton and Otautau. This was an important development in the horse and buggy days. Gradually, too, the shanty gold rush town of 1863 began to disappear, and in the business area more substantial buildings in brick were built. In the suburbs better houses were built in wood.

Invercargill has not a great many historic buildings. One of the oldest is the railway station, which dates back as far as 1864, the year the famous wooden railway to Makarewa was opened. Changes have been made but the building is still substantially the same. By length of years it may have qualified as an ancient monument, but probably a majority of the people of Invercargill would not be sorry to see it replaced by a modern and more attractive station. Many requests for replacement have been made to the Government, one as early as 1880.

What was once the headquarters of the Southland Provincial Council and later the Borough Council hall still stands in Kelvin Street, next to the shop of its new owners Calder Mackay Co. Ltd. Originally a Masonic temple, it was built about the same time as the railway station.

One of the city's most prominent landmarks the water tower may be valued by the citizens mainly for its functional purpose, but some visitors have seen in it a thing of architectural beauty. One described it as "an architectural treasure that should be saved for posterity."

Invercargill once had its own port at its back door - the New River harbour. It is a bit difficult to believe, in face of the silted up condition of the estuary now, that it was possible for coastal craft to berth at the jetty 35 to 40 years ago. The silting up was gradual. In 1886 the New River harbourmaster, Captain Clare, reported that there was a danger of the harbour being silted up by sand

blown from the Sandy Point domain. The Borough Council, which controlled the harbour, asked the town gardener, Thomas Waugh, to devise a remedy and after a good deal of trouble he succeeded in establishing marram grass which bound the sand. The original vegetation had been destroyed. Rabbits were the cause of the trouble. They loosened the sand with their numerous burrows and ate out the grass to the very roots.

The rabbits were the descendants of a few that arrived at Bluff in the Helenslee in 1863, and were "turned adrift" at Sandy Point. There was a liberation ceremony and toasts, presumably to the rabbits, were drunk in champagne. There is a story - if it is not true it deserves to be - that an old Highlander stood on a sandhill and cursed the rabbits in Gaelic. He told those who had set the rabbits free they would rue their day's work, and they would not have had to live many years to find how right the old Scotsman had been.

The rabbits are now under control and in Sandy Point domain (5,600 acres) the city has a most valuable asset, with ample room for all manner of sports grounds including Teretonga Park for motor racing and a golf course.

The city has 300 acres of reserves within its bounds, including 200 acres of Queen's Park. When strolling through this park today, it may be difficult to visualise that it ~~once~~ had a racecourse, the first meeting being held there in 1885. The Southland A. & P. Association had its showgrounds in the park from 1882 to 1912. The first show was held on the present grounds in 1913.

Today the children's playground at Queen's Park is a place of enjoyment for hundreds of children. It is well equipped with apparatus such as swings and slides. There is a paddling pool given by the Invercargill Rotary Club, and greatest feature of all, a fountain surmounted by the statue of a boy, and circled with animal statues in bronze, on which the children may climb and enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. This notable addition to the grounds sculpted by Sir Charles Wheeler was provided by a bequest of £30,000 under the will of J.B. Thomson "for the purchase for erection in Queen's Park of a Peter Pan or similar statue group for the enjoyment of the children." The bequest was described as "the most wonderful gift the city has had for years." The statuary group was unveiled by the Queen Mother on the occasion of her visit to the city on April 16 1966.

Invercargill was the first town in New Zealand to have a municipal golf course. The course, now extended to 18 holes, is in Queen's Park and is under lease to the Queen's Park Golf Club. When the Invercargill Club moved out to Otatara in 1915 the Council, at the suggestion of the Club, agreed to maintain the course in Queen's Park and it remained municipal for a few years.

The Southland Museum occupies a site in the Park. Some distance further out are Anderson Park and Art Gallery, a gift to the city by the family of the late Sir Robert and Lady Anderson.

The Invercargill Licensing Trust, which was formed after restoration of retail liquor licences in the city had been carried in 1943, has a sound reputation for the high standard of its hotels and for the efficient way in which they are conducted. The Kelvin Hotel, to name the largest, is one of the most modern and up-to-date hotels in New Zealand. The city also has private hotels, motels and bed and breakfast houses.

### BLUFF

Long before the days of organised white settlement in Southland, Bluff harbour was known to sealers, whalers and those interested in the commercial use of New Zealand flax. Its name then was Port Macquarie, after a Governor of N.S.W. Many of the ships which frequented the southern coasts of New Zealand in those days came from Sydney.

After Bluff had been declared a port of entry, no time was lost in building a customs house there - in February 1856. This may be accepted as the beginning of the town and port. Now 115 years later Bluff is one of the leading ports of New Zealand, and there is every indication that it has an even greater future.

The harbour first came into its own in 1863, the year of the Lake Wakatipu gold boom. Bluff was the most convenient port for the Lake goldfields and hundreds of men and tons of supplies arrived there. In addition six immigrant ships direct from Britain reached Bluff during 1863. But there was no wharf at Bluff until about the middle of 1864, by which time the boom had ended or was ending.

However, any recession was only temporary. Southland had need of its only deep water port, the value of which was enhanced when the Invercargill-Bluff railway was opened in February 1867. Bluff thus became the first port in New Zealand with rail connection. The second was Lyttelton, but it was not connected by rail with Christchurch until 10 months after the opening of the line to Bluff.

In step with the growing production of Southland, Bluff has steadily increased in activity and importance. About 100 years after the first customs house was built at Bluff, the Harbour Board decided to have new wharves and other facilities. The result is the most modern port in New Zealand on an artificial island. The port and its associated facilities were built at a cost of over \$12 million. Southlanders take pride in the fact that more than 90% of this sum was raised in Southland. A major feature is the mechanical loaders which can handle



meat and cheese and certain packaged goods. They can load at a much faster rate than was possible with the sling method, and may be worked in all weathers.

Across the harbour is the latest addition to the importance of Bluff, the Tiwai Point aluminium smelter. What it will contribute to the prosperity of Southland in a few years time makes pleasant contemplation.

Visitors to Bluff should not fail to travel by the new tar-sealed road to Observation Point on the top of Bluff Hill, and enjoy what may be fairly described as a splendid panoramic view.

### GORE

With a population of 8,600 Gore is the second largest town in Southland. It is as pleasant a country town as any of its size in New Zealand, and as a business centre it is a good deal more important than several. It is the country town for an extensive area, where intensive farming is carried on. Part of this area is strictly speaking West Otago, but topography often defies boundaries fixed by man. In this West Otago country there are some of the leading Romney breeders of New Zealand, and the annual Romney ram fairs in Gore are in the forefront for that breed in New Zealand.

Gore was first known as Longford because it was alongside a ford over the Mataura. After the traveller had crossed the river he could travel north-west up the Waimea plains or continue south towards Invercargill. Gore developed rather slowly until the coming of the railways. With some exaggeration, it was called the Chicago of the South. The difference is one of degree. Chicago became the world's greatest railway centre. Gore's claim is much more modest, but there is no doubt that the coming of the railway was a great stimulant to the town's growth. The railway from Invercargill to Gore was opened on August 30, 1875, and the line from Christchurch to Invercargill on January 22, 1879. Gore became a junction with the opening of the Waimea Plains line on July 31, 1880. The Gore-Waikaka line was opened on November 27, 1908. Both these branch lines have been closed and, therefore, Gore's importance as a railway town has diminished, but it has become more important as a business centre.

Gore, like Invercargill, was once "dry", but is now in the Mataura Licensing Trust district. The Trust has its headquarters at Gore which, in common with other centres in the district (Mataura, Edendale, Wyndham and Tokanui), has been provided with first-class accommodation by the Trust. The Trust's motor hotel, Croydon Lodge, has an excellent elevated site with a view across the Waimea Plains.

Dolamore Park is an unrivalled playground at the foot of the Hokonui Hills. It was in these hills that the



famous Hokonui whisky was distilled in defiance of the law. But stills were not unknown in other parts of Southland and, indeed, the pioneer of the business may have been one McShane who lived at Sandy Point in the 1850s. He made his Hokonui from the edible part of the cabbage tree, and by all accounts it was potent stuff.

Gore has a distinction that seems now to have been forgotten. It was one of the first towns in New Zealand to be lighted by electricity. That was in 1894. The generating plant was built by a company and was taken over later by the Borough Council. Gore was once credited with being the best lighted town in the South Island.

### MATAURA

Eight miles from Gore on the road to Invercargill is Mataura with a population of 2,760. It is an industrial town but not in the old world sense of being a less desirable place in which to live. It is in fact a pleasant town, and busy and prosperous with a paper mill, a freezing works (owned by the Southland Frozen Meat Co.), a dairy factory and a stock food plant. At an early date power was generated at the Mataura falls and was supplied to the freezing works and the paper mill. In 1904 surplus power was transmitted to supplement the Gore supply.

### EDENDALE

Twenty five miles from Invercargill on the main road and railway is Edendale. This is a town to which the dairy cow is still as important as it has been for 90 years. Its dairy factory was the first in New Zealand apart from a small factory on the Otago Peninsula. It was established by the Australia and New Zealand Land Co., which, having developed its Edendale estate, wished to subdivide the land into farms for sale. The company thought dairy farming would be the best for prospective purchasers, and it not only built the factory but invested in a large herd of cows to give the enterprise a fair start. The company employed women and boys to milk the cows at the rate of one penny a cow. The ship Dunedin, which sailed from Port Chalmers in February 1882 with the first shipment of frozen meat for Britain, also carried a quantity of butter which almost certainly came from the Edendale factory.

### WYNDHAM

About three miles from Edendale is Wyndham. If each expanded a bit they could become one town, divided by the Mataura River, and centre of an excellent fishing area. In some ways Wyndham is the more important. It has the showgrounds of the Wyndham A. and P. Society, a racecourse, and just recently a Form I to IV High School, known as Menzies College was opened in the town. The College is named after Dr J.A.R. Menzies, first superintendent of

Southland who was one of the pioneer runholders in the Wyndham district. The district was first settled about the time of the Crimean War and Wyndham was the name of one of the English generals of that War. The streets of the town have names associated with the Crimea - Alma, Raglan, Balaclava, Cardigan, Nightingale and Florence. The town was named by Sir John Richardson, third superintendent of Otago. A railway was built from Edendale to Wyndham and on to Glenham, but this is one of the branch lines that has been scrapped. Visitors to Edendale should not forget Wyndham.

### RIVERTON

Riverton is one of the oldest towns in New Zealand. It celebrated its centenary in 1937. It began as a shore whaling station. Captain John Howell, who was in charge, realised that whales were a wasting asset and that the settlement would have a much better chance of becoming permanent if it was based on the harvest of the land rather than on the harvest of the sea. So crops were sown and cattle imported from Australia.

Riverton in the early days of Southland was probably about as important as Invercargill, and considerably longer established. There were those who thought that it should have been chosen as the capital. In a large measure Invercargill owed that honour to its proximity to Bluff, Southland's only good deep water port. Riverton as a river port was not in the same category, and it declined further in importance after the Invercargill-Riverton railway was opened in 1879.

But the town has always been a pleasant place of residence, and what may be rated as a suburb, Riverton Rocks has grown into one of Southland's most popular holiday resorts. Many people have weekend cribs there. The town has safe and attractive bathing beaches, good hotel and motel accommodation and excellent fishing facilities. The Early Settlers' Museum has many exhibits associated with the pioneering days of Southland.

### WINTON

It has been said that Winton began as "a hole in the bush". Today it is a pleasant, prosperous country town, the centre of one of the most fertile farming districts, not only in Southland but in New Zealand. It was the decision of the Southland Provincial Council to build a wooden railway to about 20 miles north of Invercargill that was responsible for the founding of Winton. The country over these 20 miles was very swampy, and the so-called road was almost impassable in winter. Invercargill was doing a considerable trade with the Lake Wakatipu goldfields, and this, it was thought, justified the expense of the wooden railway. The rails had been laid only as far as Makarewa

when the money gave out. However, considerable formation work had been done between Makarewa and Winton, and the Provincial Council eventually decided to save the invested capital by building the full length of the line in metal rails. Thus Winton had a working railway as early as March 1871.

Winton at one time had a vision of becoming a railway centre. A league was formed to advocate the building of a line from Winton to Otautau and so to the Nightcaps coalfields but the connection was eventually made by a branch line leaving the Riverton line at Thornbury. A line was built from Winton out east to Hedgehope. The original intention was to carry the line to Gore. This was not done, though in the days when railways were of major importance, it may have seemed a feasible proposition. Now the railway to Hedgehope has gone the way of many branch lines. The railway was continued north from Winton and reached Kingston in 1878.

It may be of interest that Winton once had the experience of a break in the railway gauge. The Invercargill-Bluff and the Invercargill-Winton lines were built in the standard English gauge of 4ft 8½in. by the Southland Provincial Government. When the General Government took over the building of railways at the beginning of the 1870s, it decreed that all public lines should be in the 3ft 6in. gauge. A portion of the Winton-Kingston line had been built and opened before the gauge of the Invercargill-Winton line was changed on Saturday, December 18, 1875. The Invercargill-Bluff line was changed the following Monday. Invercargill, too, had experience of the gauge break because the main line in the narrower gauge was opened as far as Gore before the change was made.

### LUMSDEN

It was as a communications centre that Lumsden first became important. It was here that the railway across the Waimea Plains joined the line from Invercargill to Kingston, and from Lumsden another line was built to Mosburn. Its importance as a communications centre has been maintained in these days of road services, but there will be a reminder of the days of steam when what was known as the Kingston Flyer is restored in the form of a vintage train. It will run between Lumsden and Kingston in the holiday season from mid-December to early April.

From Lumsden the traveller may go north to Kingston, west to Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri, south to Invercargill and south-east to Gore. The original name of Lumsden was The Elbow, but this was thought to be unsuitable and so a change was made to Lumsden after a well-known early resident of Invercargill.

### KINGSTON

If the boundaries of Southland are the same as the boundaries of the land district, then Kingston is on the



border. The boundary touches Lake Wakatipu at Kingston, then goes up the west side of the Lake and so on to the coast to a little north of Milford Sound. This famous Sound is, therefore, in Southland, which is compensation for the fact that Queenstown is in Otago.

When many people travelled to Queenstown by train and then by lake steamer, Kingston was an important little place because it was here that passengers transferred from one form of transport to the other. Now the road by-passes it, but the vintage train should help to restore it to something of its former importance.

### TE ANAU

Within recent years Te Anau has been the township of fastest growth in Southland. It is an old settlement but for many years did not advance much beyond an hotel and a store or two and a few houses. Two factors which have helped the growth of Te Anau are the sealing of the road from Mossburn, and the development and settlement of land in the district by the Lands Department. The improvement of the road encouraged people to build weekend cottages at Te Anau and this in turn may have encouraged retired people to settle in the township.

The building of the Manapouri-Doubtful Sound power complex has also helped in the growth of Te Anau, and there has been similar development at Manapouri. A road about 13 miles long has been built over the Wilmot Pass from the West Arm of Lake Manapouri to Deep Cove, an arm of Doubtful Sound. Here the waters from the powerhouse, built 700ft underground, empty from a tail race tunnel  $6\frac{1}{4}$  miles long and 30ft in diameter. Thus the building of this power station has made a part of Fiordland more readily accessible.

### MILFORD SOUND

Milford Sound one of New Zealand's most famous tourist resorts may be readily reached from Te Anau by the Eglinton and Hollyford Valleys of magnificent scenery, and then by the Homer Tunnel to the Sound, where accommodation may be had, either in the hotel or in the motor camp, established originally by the Automobile Association (Southland). Those pressed for time may go from Te Anau to Milford and back in a day, or a night may be spent at Cascade Creek Lodge. A recommended trip from here is by launch across Lake Gunn to the Melita Falls. Another launch trip is across Lake Te Anau to the glow worm cave, or the cave of the rushing waters - either an appropriate name.

There are those who say that the best way to reach Milford is by the track, "the most wonderful walk in the world." This journey takes three days, with overnight stops at the Pompalona and Quintin huts. The track begins at Glade House at the head of Lake Te Anau. Those

who undertake the walk should be fit and suitably shod. As for age, it is for individuals to decide whether they are too old. Elderly people have made the walk and in some cases have finished it in fresher condition than much younger trampers. It is, perhaps, true that a person is only as old as he or she feels.

### TUATAPERE

Beautifully situated near the banks of the Waiau River, Tuatapere is the chief sawmill centre of Southland. Most of the 23 registered sawmills of the province are in the Tuatapere district. Tuatapere was rather late in developing. The railway did not reach it until 1909, 24 years after it had been opened to Orepuki on May 5, 1885. Riverton and Otautau both had rail connection by 1879. A post office in a store on the east bank of the Waiau was opened on January 1, 1904. There was a hotel on the west bank and the hotelkeeper operated the ferry across the river. Sawmills and flaxmills were at work in the district, but it was after the opening of the railway that Tuatapere went ahead.

### FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK

Comprising 3,023,712 acres Fiordland National Park is the largest reserve of its kind in New Zealand, and one of the largest in the world. The area has a magnificent rugged beauty which has reminded visitors of the Canadian Rockies.

Fiordland provides plenty of opportunities for sport, including deer stalking. Within recent years concern has been expressed at the damage the deer were doing to the vegetation. No permit to stalk them is required, but in the interests of safety a permit must be obtained to carry a firearm anywhere in the Park. Between 1900 and 1910 moose, axis deer, red deer and Wapiti were liberated in the Park. The moose and the axis deer have failed to thrive, but the red deer reached pest proportions and many thousands have been killed to keep them under control. The Wapiti herd of Fiordland is the only one in the southern hemisphere. The original animals, eighteen, were presented to the New Zealand Government in 1905 by President Theodore Roosevelt on behalf of the United States.

Fiordland provides ample opportunities for mountaineering, trapping, fishing and skiing. Naturalists, too, will find it a happy hunting ground.

There are parts of Fiordland that have never been explored though they may have been seen from the air. It is easy to understand, therefore, how years ago credence was given to the claim that the rugged, bush-clad territory sheltered a lost tribe of Maoris. The few Maoris that Cook met in Dusky Sound were timid and wary, and they may have

been the remnants of a defeated tribe that had fled into Fiordland to escape their enemies. These fugitives perhaps gave rise to the later legend of the Lost Tribe.

### OREPUKI

A township that has not lived up to an earlier promise is Orepuki, formerly known as Hirstfield. There is both gold and coal in the district, but it was on shale deposits that the growth and prosperity of the town were expected to be based. The first attempt to establish the shale oil industry was commenced in 1879 but did not succeed. A more determined effort was made later, when the N.Z. Coal & Oil Company was launched in London with a capital of £180,000. About £140,000 was spent on developing the mine and building extensive works for treating the shale. The prospects seemed fair for the production of oil, paraffin wax and tar, but once again the hopes of the promoters and shareholders were dashed and the industry was closed down in 1902.

The winning of gold at Roundhill not far from Colac Bay was commenced by miners from Orepuki, but they found the returns disappointing and sold their claims to Chinese who dug deeper and came on payable gold. Between 500 and 600 Chinese were at one time working at Roundhill and a Chinatown came into being. Until a comparatively recent date gold was being won on a sluicing claim in the district. The gold was reputedly of the finest quality, and some platinum was also recovered.

### OTAUTAU

The county town of Wallace, Otautau owes the distinction to its central position. Earlier the Wallace County Council had its headquarters at Riverton. In its day Otautau has had such industries as sawmilling, flax milling and flour milling, and during World War II a linen flax factory. But its mainstay was, and is, the farming community by which it is surrounded, plus the activities of the N.Z. Forest Service.

The railway reached Otautau in 1879 and, in common with what happened in those days, that increased the importance of the town. Otautau was obviously not the terminus. The railway had to be continued to give the necessary service to the Nightcaps coalfields. The Nightcaps Coal Company was formed in 1880 and on March 3, 1882, the Government line from Otautau to Wairio and the company's line from Wairio to Nightcaps were officially opened. The township of Nightcaps was laid out on 500 acres bought from William Johnson of the Annandale estate. For a long time Nightcaps was the coal mining centre of Southland, but with the working out of mines, the development of new ones and the adoption of open cast mining Ohai gradually replaced Nightcaps as the main centre. Annual production of coal is about 270,000 tons. The Ohai Railway Board owns the private railway from Wairio to the coalfields. Ohai now has much the larger population 940; Nightcaps 580.



## FORTROSE

Southern Southland was called the neglected south and, as if in proof of this, Fortrose is a town that has not fulfilled early hopes. It began as a whaling station and developed into a considerable port at which ships from Bluff and Dunedin called. The improvement of land communications, including the building of railways, made much of the coastal shipping redundant, and the business of Fortrose as a port suffered accordingly. At one time it was thought that the railway line from Edendale to Wyndham would be continued to Fortrose. It was the rival Seaward Bush line that was extended into the southern district, but it by-passed Fortrose. When the flax industry was at its height in Southland there were six mills within 15 miles of Fortrose. Holiday makers and picnickers are attracted to Fortrose in the season.

## WAIKAWA

A history similar to that of Fortrose belongs to Waikawa. It, too, was a whaling station which developed into a busy port in the boom days of coastal shipping. Some of the first coal found in the southern part of New Zealand was mined at Waikawa and taken to Dunedin. There was also a quarry which produced building stone. Neither industry had a long life. Sawmilling and fishing proved more enduring. Waikawa is beautifully situated in restful surroundings. At Curio Bay three miles from Waikawa are the remains on the beach of a petrified forest, buried millions of years ago. Every grain of the timber may be seen in the fossilized stumps.

## TOKANUI

Like several towns in Southland, Tokanui gained importance from the railway. It became the terminus of the Seaward Bush line. It was opened to Tokanui on September 2 1911, after what may well have been a record for slow construction. Now the railway has gone but Tokanui has its established place in the southern district.

Along the coast between Fortrose and Waikawa is Waipapa Point, scene of one of the worst shipping disasters in New Zealand history. This was the wreck of s.s. Tararua on April 29, 1881. Of the 151 people on board, passengers and crew, only 20 were saved and, because of the circumstances, not from any disregard for the safety of the women and children, they were all men. The Tararua, a well known intercolonial steamer belonging to the Union Steam Ship Co., was on a usual run from Port Chalmers to Melbourne, with calls at Bluff and Hobart. She was a popular vessel because she kept a reliable timetable and also because of the good accommodation and service provided aboard.

The lighthouse on Waipapa Point was not built until after the wreck. It went into operation on January 1, 1884. The Tararua was carrying a quantity of silver, but attempts to recover it, some of recent date, have failed.

## STEWART ISLAND

Visitors to Southland should not miss crossing to Stewart Island, or Rakiura - "the land of the glowing skies." At one time people may have been deterred by the reputation of Foveaux Strait for storm-tossed waters. The reputation may have been worse than the reality. However this may be, the journey may now be made by amphibian aircraft from Invercargill airport.

Stewart Island is not entirely unspoiled. Man has been at work there - sawmilling, searching for gold and tin and, on a limited scale, farming. But the Island is nearer its natural state than many other parts of New Zealand, and the aim now is to keep it that way so far as is possible. Fishing is now a principal industry of the Islanders and that can do no harm to the land.

Stewart Island is a place where it is possible "to get away from it all", but its history, so far as the Pakeha is concerned, stretches back to the days of the sealers and whalers, and so it has had its lively moments.

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For further information about Invercargill and Southland contact -

### SOUTHLAND PROGRESS LEAGUE (Inc)

Information & Public Relations Section,  
Crawford House, Don St, Invercargill.

P.O. Box 311

Telephone 84-538

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Telex 4579

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